

DHAKA WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 15, 2004

Construction of 'heritage park' begins next month

SHAHADAT HOSSAIN RIAD

The planned 'heritage park' Mini Bangladesh, first of its kind in the country, is set to represent our heritage, the engineers who designed the project said.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is expected to inaugurate the construction work of the project next month.

The liberation war affairs ministry had decided to construct the park after the name of late President Ziaur Rahman. Later, it was renamed as "Shaheed Zia Memorial Complex and Mini Bangladesh."

Those who interested in enjoying the country's architectural beauty, ethnic traditions and archaeological inheritance will be able to materialise their dream very shortly having a glimpse of the 'heritage park', the officials claimed.

Historical Kalurghat Betar Kendra (Kalurghat Radio Station) from where independence was proclaimed in 1971 is now almost ready to encompass the park.

The ministry has chosen the site for developing the park at a cost of Tk 55.95 crore to conserve the historical radio station as an evidence of War of Liberation for the future generation, he said. The

Executive Committee of National Economic Council (EcneC) approved the project.

The then Awami League leader MA Hannan and late President Ziaur Rahman on behalf of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had proclaimed the independence from the radio station on March 26 and 27 respectively in 1971.

Concord Engineering and Construction Limited, a private construction firm, will implement the project under the supervision of Public Works Department in two years.

"The objective of the park is to show the entire Bangladesh at a glance," said site engineer Saidur Rahman. "Eventually it will become a live museum with the architectural and archaeological legacy of the country," he added.

In the preface of the project was underlined that the initiative has been taken to construct a memorial complex after the name of late President Ziaur Rahman at the historical Kalurghat Betar Kendra.

Replica of major structures of the country, including Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban (parliament building), National Memorial of Savar, Ahsan Manjil, Curzon Hall of Dhaka University, Paharpur Monastery, Karttajir Temple of

Dinajpur, Lalbagh Fort and Sona Masjid, will be installed at the park.

Under the project, Kalurghat Betar Kendra studio from where the proclamation of independence came and the technical equipment will be decorated and furnished.

Besides, model of three railway stations, Church of Saint Nicholas of Gazipur, Choto Kuthi and Bara Kuthi of Rajshahi along with houses containing socio-cultural rituals of 13 tribal communities will also be set up at the valley.

"A 'tower restaurant', an artificial hill, an artificial lake and a fountain will be built at the park," said Saidur Rahman.

He said that there would be special packages for the kids.

"Different rides including bumper boat, paddle boat, family coaster, 12 horses carousel, Farris wheel, bumper car and kiddie swing will be installed," he said, adding that a tunnel under the artificial hill for train track will also be constructed.

We hope to complete the job on schedule, he added.

Concord will hand over the park to the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs after completion of the work, he said. Then the ministry will either lease it out to private sector or deal itself, sources said.



Bangladesh Betar Kalurghat centre (left) from where the proclamation of independence of Bangladesh was aired on March 26 night and the proposed site for heritage park Mini Bangladesh (right). The trees will be felled to develop the park.



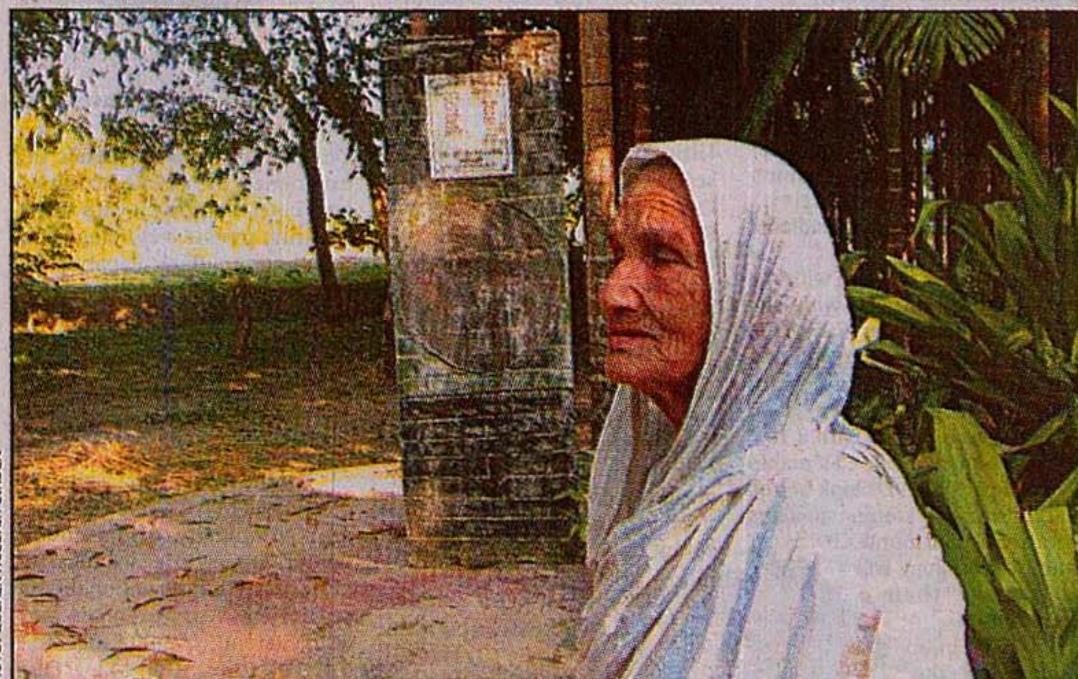
PHOTO: ZOBIAH HOSSAIN SIKDER

ASM Mahbubur Rahman, resident engineer of Kalurghat Betar Kendra, said that the Betar authorities have already completed all formalities including handing over of land.

"Some 13.6 acres of land out of 27 acres owned by Betar were handed over to the Ministry of

Liberation War by the Ministry of Information to build the park", he added.

To implement the project, a good number of aged trees will be felled, sources said.



The horrible incident of 1971 still haunts Madhuri Lata. She whimpers for her martyred husband and spends some time taking care of the monument (on the background) every morning.

PHOTO: ZOBIAH HOSSAIN SIKDER

Tale of an abandoned monument

Madhuri Lata still whimpers for her martyred husband and relatives

SHAHIDUL ISLAM

Madhuri Lata sits silently every morning in the courtyard for some time with her eyes closed and prays for salvation of the departed souls of her near and dear ones killed by the Pakistani occupation forces during the War of Liberation in 1971.

She is one of millions who lost their near and dear ones during the nine months' bloodbath from March 25 to December 16 in 1971.

"The horrible war memories still haunt me terribly," the elderly woman told The Daily Star.

She looked deserted, pale and frail.

Madhuri, close to crossing 100 soon, is herself a living monument of ages who witnessed many epoch-making, historic and turbulent period as well as happenings of the immediate past century.

The slaughter ground at Jamijuri in Dohazari of Chandanpur is now virtually an abandoned and decrepit three-foot concrete wall, popularly known as 'Martyr Monument'. It is difficult to discover any remains or memoirs of the war here.

The Pakistani forces killed hundreds of innocent Bangalees, including women and children, at the ground in 1971.

And, 14 close relatives of Madhuri, including her husband, were slaughtered here. Thirteen others were: Master Prafullan Ranjan Bhattacharya, Kabiraj Tara Charan Bhattacharya, freedom fighter Bimal Das, Master Milan Kanti Bhattacharya, Bishwesher Bhattacharya, Dr Karuna Chowdhury, Amar Das, Hari Ranjan Bhattacharya, freedom fighter Subhas Das, Benubala Bhattacharya, Mohendra Sen Bhattacharya, Nagendra Rani and Ramani Das.

Madhuri Lata and her only son Sunil Bhattacharya, of 1971 nightmare live. Sunil is now a doctor.

"It was 14th of Baishakh (Madhuri could not recollect the Roman date), the Pakistani forces stormed our house and opened fire indiscriminately. I was a bit fortunate and escaped hurriedly in flight along with few other women through the backyard," Madhuri narrated feebly the nightmarish experience of her life.

With tears rolling down her face she continued: "As we returned to the house after few hours of the massacre, we found

of my husband and others lying in a pool of blood."

Each family of the martyrs had received financial help once from the post-independence Awami League government.

Later, the concrete monument was built and an AL leader gave Tk 15,000 for development of the monument. But afterwards neither families of the martyrs got any help from anywhere nor a single touch of masonry was seen on the monument yet. And, the monument after 33 years of independence is on the verge of complete decay.

the week that was

Seminar on America: The Real Story

A seminar titled "America: The Real Story" was held at the American Corner of Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB), Chittagong Campus here on Tuesday.

IUB, Chittagong Campus and American Centre of the US Embassy in Dhaka jointly organised the seminar.

American Centre Deputy Director Dr Michael Jones in his speech gave a details on the history, culture, politics and economics of America.

IUB, Chittagong Campus Co-ordinator Professor Syed Saffdarul Haq made the address of welcome at the seminar. Larry Swartz of Bureau of South Asian Affairs in Washington and Mahtab Uddin Ahmad of Information Research Centre and Deputy Chief of Information Department Mahbubul Alam also spoke among others.

Rasul Nizam accorded reception

Rasul Nizam was accorded a reception here on Friday.

Meridian Group accorded a reception to Rasul Nizam, Honorary Consul to France, at Meridian Tanduri at Nasirabad on Friday for the French Government award titled "Knight of the Legend".

Chittagong chamber President Amir Humayun Mahmud Chowdhury was the chief guest at the reception. Meridian Group Managing Director SM Kamal Pasha hands over a cheque for Tk 1 lakh for Chittagong Maa-O-Shishu Hospital board of directors member to Dr Fazlul Karim.

Newly elected Chittagong Club President Engineer Ali Ahmed, Dalinik Purbokone Publisher Jasim Uddin Chowdhury, Azadi Editor MA Malek and Dr. Khurshid Jamil Chowdhury and Dr. Anjumanara Begum of Maa-O-Shishu Hospital and Meridian Group Chairman Kohinoor Kamal were present.

Engr Ali new president of Ctg Club

The election to the executive committee of Chittagong Club Limited for the year 2004-2005 was held on Thursday.

Former President Engineer Ali Ahmed was elected president uncontested.

Other office-bearers are Dr. Saifuddin Md. Tareq, SM Abu Tayeb, Dr. Mohammad Jahangir, Engineer Md. Iqbal Karim, Advocate Shaheen A Reza

Chowdhury, Habibul Haq Tusher and Sajjad Hossain Saju.

CCC to rehabilitate sex-workers

Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury on Friday said that Chittagong City Corporation would take initiative to rehabilitate sex-workers in a planned way.

He said this while he was addressing as the chief guest a rally in front of the Department of Social Welfare office at Strand Road in the city.

Organisation for Women's Development in Bangladesh (OWDEB) organised the rally at the concluding day of the 16-day campaign aimed at creating mass awareness against family repression under Community Mobilisation Project to End Violence against Women of Oxfam-Bangladesh.

Mohiuddin also said that love, respect and compassion to each other, side by side with proper education, can put an end to women repression as well as establish equal rights and remove gender discrimination in the society.

OWDEB Chief Executive Professor Shyamali Majumder, Oxfam-Bangladesh Programme co-ordinator MB Akter, local social worker Zafar Ahmad Sarder and Dalia Noor Sweety also spoke at the rally with local Ward Commissioner Md Abu Zafar in the chair.

President of the organisation, Ananya Bhattacharya read out the written statement at the conference and Krishna Mohan Tripura, Arfan Ali of Rangamati, Saroj Kumar Chakma, Nani Gopal Tripura and Binod Bhattacharya spoke.

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